



VOYAGEUR TRAIL NEWS

PUBLISHED BY THE VOYAGEUR TRAIL ASSOCIATION, A MEMBER OF F.O.H.T.A.

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SPRING 1985



" SHALL WE STOP HERE FOR LUNCH ?"
DRIVING LAKE – ECHO RIDGES SECTION

ACTIVE PEOPLE

There are many members who have put in a lot of work, and I hope they won't be too hurt if they aren't mentioned. I'm sure that the Casque Isles club are going to miss that one person whirlwind Heather Jessup McGrath while she is studying in Winnipeg. Lorne Bourke will be the main contact there at this time.

Another whirlwind of activity over the past year has been Delmar Ellis from Sarnia, who has walked more of our trail than many local members. In one day last summer, he hiked from Gros Cap to east of Highway 17 along the Voyageur Trail. He has also reblazed the shorter loop at Whitefish Falls near Espanola. It is unusual to find so enthusiastic a hiker from southern Ontario working on our trail. Delmar has also written to inform us of his ambitious excursion planned for next summer (no formal date yet). He intends to canoe and hike the Rideau Canal/Trail by canoeing a section of the canal and leaving the canoe to hike back for the car before proceeding on. He would be happy to have some company and anyone interested should drop him a line (1521 Colborne Rd., Sarnia Ont., N7V 3M1).

Ian Hamilton is not known to many members, but he has been quietly sorting and plotting up all the landowners on maps so we can now easily determine who owns the property on each section of trail. Does your section of trail have a similar map? If so, Ian would like a copy for the central records (c/o box 66).

Brian Williams and the new Saulteaux executive have done an excellent job in the revitalization of the Saulteaux club.

Mr. John Scott has expressed the intention to hike all of the completed trail around Lake Superior this summer. John welcomes any hikers who would care to join him for a portion of the hike. Please write him at Box 382, Rainy River, Ont., POW 1L0 if you are interested.

NATIONAL TRAIL

Several members of the Voyageur Trail Association have attended Hike Ontario meetings over the past 13 months. There has been enthusiastic discussion about a province long hiking trail which could then become part of a trail stretching from coast to coast across the country. The Voyageur Trail would be part of this route which will usually be on trails in existence wherever possible. There was a general feeling that such a "vision" can come to fruition if the concept of hiking can take on a higher profile in society in general. The vision involves hikers and interested people becoming active in a public support sense. Hiking needs to get into the media. The point was made that money is available to support such causes if public support is there.

The concept of a national hiking trail was discussed recently in an issue of 'Hiking'. Of particular interest was the idea of a national relay hike.

It should be mentioned that the concept of a national trail is only in the discussion stages now. Landowners have not yet been approached and no trail has been built except where clubs and parks have constructed their own. A National Trail group has been formed.

If you wish to become involved in such a trail, or if you wish to present an opinion, Brian Williams is one of the Hike Ontario (formerly FOHTA) representatives in our club. In addition, we are represented by Paul Syme in the National Trail group. Drop one of them a line through the club.

SOME COMMENTS ON USE AND OVERUSE OF THE TRAIL

Jack Smit has made some observations that are interesting in view of recent information that suggests that parts of some trails in the province are being

SAULTEAUX CLUB

overused. He states "It was raining heavily and the sky was dark. After a rainy summer, wet bush overgrew the trail. It was very difficult to follow. Then I came to a spot where we had worked in the spring. Five foot ferns were growing in the middle of the trail." Perhaps our trail is getting overuse from plants.

- 881 Alan & Helen Ballak (942-6620)
- 882 Gisela Nolte (254-2849)
- 883 Bruce Cranston (253-8122)
- 884 Charles Walker (759-6151)
- 885 Mrs. Rita & Paul Adams (254-2068)
- 890 Brian Coulas (256-5182)
- 895 Fran Aspinall (254-5839)
- 897 Alan Comfort (949-1522)

Jack made the point that local clubs have to mark trails well or the result can be disastrous for inexperienced hikers. He also states that once a trail is established, it needs many person trips to keep it clear. Can outdoor events somehow be more focussed on the trail in areas where the trail exists? Also, can the idea of the trail as a wilderness adventure be better sold to visitors? It is also possible that with a little more effort, more sections will be completed and the trail will become more useable and used.

CHANGES

Marcel Gingras is now living in Chilliwack, B.C. Ron Lee Kam has moved to St. James St. in Thunder Bay. Rita Bertoli now lives on Caesar Road in the Sault (949-9277). Anne O'Connor has moved to Mark St. in the Sault. Paul Chapman now resides on McNabb St. in the Sault. Jack and Virve Squire were missed on the last membership list and are at 942-2370. Steve Dominy can now be contacted through 253-7541.

NEW MEMBERS

A hearty welcome is extended to the following new members (phone numbers are listed for the benefit of local clubs):

ASSOCIATION

- 886 Sheila Beckerton, Sault Ste. Marie
- 887 Ross McLean, Guelph
- 888 John & Joy Wood, Thunder Bay
- 891 Kurt Ramig, New York State
- 894 Ralph Booth, Toronto
- 899 Craege Mcquarrie
- 1001 Jean Cooley
- 1002 John and Jill Leslie
- 1003 John A. Scott

PERNWOBIKONG CLUB

- 892 Kaye Menard (356-7198)
- 893 Henry Provencher(356-7816)

HAVE YOU HUGGED A TREE RECENTLY

I must confess that up until recently, I was a downhill skier, but after my ten year old downhilling son returned from a school outing and said he quite enjoyed cross country skiing, I thought it must be time to discover for myself the joys of this form of exercise. Circular tours of Kinsmen Park didn't appeal to me, so I thought that the best way to start was to join the March 2 VTA outing led by our own expert Tom Allinson. He assured me that as a downhill skier, I should have no problem.

It was a beautiful sunny day, obviously a good day for bushwhacking on the icy snow in the Gros Cap area. Tom is an avid bushwhacker because as he puts it, "skiing isn't quite the same unless I'm a bit lost".

Soon after setting off, I learned how to fall over backwards onto my pack-sack (on the icy road before putting skis on). We then spent half an hour getting a pickup truck out of a snow-bank. It was neatly parked at right angles to the road with front and back ends both firmly stuck in the snow. The rescue mission went splendidly until the driver started to back the truck down the hill and it slid until the frozen snow-banks caught the drivers open door, practically tearing it from its hinges.

We were then away and skiing. The first and most important lesson to learn is how to stop. I am most indebted to the group for their excellent and frequent demonstrations of the various techniques used when your skis don't have steel edges. Brian Williams illustrated the art of going down onto bended knees. This is tricky to perfect as you should land facing east towards Mecca. Steve Taylor ably showed us the forward fully prone fall stop. I found this to be somewhat beyond my rather limited capabilities. Tom Allinson seemed to prefer the sitting down sideways technique which is sometimes accompanied by bending a ski pole. My favourite methods were artfully demonstrated by Donna Kidd (sitting down on your backside or hugging a tree). I was able to get lots of practice and became quite experienced at these techniques.

My initial fears about being left kilometers in the rear proved to be totally unfounded. The experts were too busy demonstrating these stopping methods. It is also difficult to go fast when one is winding off the beaten track past all of those gorgeous maples that seem to be begging to be given a loving hug.

We did, on a few occasions, ski along the Voyageur Trail which was recognizable by the knee-high blazes. We also stopped to admire Tom's direction signs at the three way junction of the trail to Gros Cap, Red Rock, and Iron Bridge. Remarkably, these were not embellished with bullet holes. We saw some birds, squirrels, animal tracks (possibly skunk

and the inevitable wooden hut and lunch time sitting log. The last two were cues for picture takers. We also made frequent closeup inspections of tree bark and crusty snow.

I recommend giving cross-country skiing with the Voyageur Trail group a try next winter. You will see some beautiful countryside in its winter state, made more memorable by the company of fellow VTA members. You will probably be given ample opportunity to hug some trees.

Patrick Capper



EDITOR'S NOTE

Information to be published in the fall newsletter should reach me by September 10 at the latest. The VTA Newsletter is there to provide information received that is of potential interest to hikers. It is only as good as the information received. More material from more writers adds diversity